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Official Records

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New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

In the absence of the President, Miss Clarke (Barbados), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 11 and 40 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/57/2 and A/57/2/Corr.1)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters: report of the Open-ended Working Group

Mr. Mmualefe (Botswana): Let me begin my statement by paying tribute to the President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Han Seung-soo, of the Republic of Korea, who served as Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. In that task, he was assisted by his Vice-Chairpersons, Ambassadors Ingólfsson of Iceland and Durrant of Jamaica. I wish to thank them all for their excellent coordination of the work of the Group. The current report of the Working Group is a product of their tireless efforts.

The report once again reflects considerable differences of opinion on issues related to the expansion of the membership of the Council and to its decision-making, including in particular, the veto. However, the report also reflects a greater convergence of views on issues related to its working methods and the transparency of its work.

It is a source of frustration that nine years of lengthy debates have not produced any real agreement on a matter as important as the reform of the Security Council. But because the issue of Council reform is central to the success of our Organization, as well as to its effectiveness and ultimate existence, our resolve to see the process to a conclusion remains undiminished. Let us remember that when world leaders met here during the Millennium Summit, they made a commitment to intensify their efforts towards achieving a comprehensive reform of the Council in all its aspects. Our efforts through the work of the Open-ended Working Group are in furtherance of that clear and unambiguous goal.

Regrettably, commitments made have yet to find concrete expression by those who still see the Security Council as an exclusive club of only a few countries. Whereas there might have been valid reasons for constituting the Security Council the way that it was when it was formed, present-day realities dictate a complete transformation of the composition of the Security Council on the basis of the principle of equitable geographical representation. Those realities also require that we in particular take into account the increasing role of developing countries in world affairs.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the position adopted by the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, namely, that the membership of the Council should be expanded from the current 15 members to 26 members, in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. In accordance with the position adopted by African Group, we also call for the allocation of two

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permanent and two additional non-permanent seats to the continent of Africa; and we are determined in that regard.

The issue of the use of the veto, or the threat of its use, needs to be reviewed as an integral part of the reform of the Security Council. It is the position of the African Group that the veto should initially be extended to the new permanent members of an expanded Council, but that it should ultimately be abolished and replaced with more democratic decision-making methods based on the sovereign equality of States.

The insistence on limited expansion on the basis of excuses that a much larger Council could possibly be ineffective reflects the perception that others are not able to govern sensibly or act decisively, a fact that none of the delegations raising such excuses can prove. Equally, those advocating an increase only in the non-permanent category of membership are addressing only part of the problem. The same delegations have insisted on the retention of the veto on the basis that it is an important decision-making tool that the Council has at its disposal. But the fact of the matter is that the veto has only been used to preserve the interests of the members that have used it.

We note, however, that there is more agreement among Member States on questions relating to the working methods of the Security Council. That agreement has made possible greater participation by Member States in the debates on various issues, thereby serving to inform the Council's decisions. However, issues regarding expansion in the membership of the Council and reforming its working methods and decision-making processes are parts of a whole, and should be addressed and resolved simultaneously. Only then will we have something to show.

It is important to ensure smooth working relationships between the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council, as there is real potential for the marginalization of the latter by excluding them from consultations on issues hotly pursued by one or more permanent members. Such a situation would call into question the legitimacy of the decisions made and actions taken by the Council.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate once again that our vigorous efforts for real and meaningful reform is unshakable. We call on all delegations to participate fully in future efforts by the Open-ended-Group and others to bring this subject to conclusion, so that all nations — large and small — can assume collective responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Murargy (Mozambique): Allow me to express my deepest condolences to the Governments and peoples of Indonesia, Australia and the other countries that lost nationals in the recent terrorist attacks in Bali. It is our sincere hope that those behind this tragedy will be brought to justice.

The Republic of Mozambique welcomes the joint debate of agenda item 11, entitled "Report of the Security Council" and agenda item 40, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". At a time when the General Assembly is undertaking reforms to improve its efficiency and rationalize its work, the clustering of these two items represents a step in the right direction.

My delegation would like to thank and congratulate the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon, for introducing the report of the Council to the General Assembly. I would also like to congratulate Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on their election to the Council for the period 2003-2004.

We are pleased to note the major improvements made in the format of the report. We are particularly impressed with the inclusion of an analysis of the work of the Council during the reporting period. The Security Council deserves our support in its efforts to improve its working methods. We encourage Council members to pay more attention to the views of the wider membership of the United Nations.

With the first step taken, we would like to see a further improvement in the analytical section introduced in the report towards a detailed account of the Council's conduct of business, particularly a description of the Security Council's meetings, rather than a mere listing, as well as more information on the environment in which discussions are held and decisions are arrived at in the Council. This will contribute to a better understanding of the Council's affairs while bridging the gap between members and non-members of the Council. We believe that the introduction of the Security Council's web site and the increased resort to open debates, briefings and

consultations with troop-contributing countries, as well as the monthly open wrap-up sessions, have played a major role in bringing together the United Nations family.

We welcome the holding of open debates to allow for better interaction between members and non-members of the Security Council. These few but successful debates have concentrated on matters that, due to their general nature, should otherwise be before the General Assembly. This could ultimately prove to be negative in that it could further reduce the agenda of the General Assembly, particularly at a time when there seems to be a consensus on the need to strengthen the effectiveness of the Assembly as the main organ of the United Nations. Therefore, we would like to propose that future open meetings of the Security Council focus more on specific issues before the Council.

The report of the Security Council clearly shows the successes and failures registered in the reporting period. The Council has proven its effectiveness with regard to the question of terrorism through the outstanding work being carried out by the Counter-Terrorism Committee, under the leadership of Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock of the United Kingdom. The Security Council has also been successful in East Timor, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone. However, the Council has been less effective in Africa and in the Middle East, despite the fact that it has spent most of its time debating conflicts in those regions.

We believe that the main reason for the Security Council's failure in those regions has been the lack of political will by the Council's main actors. In both cases we have witnessed the adoption of resolutions that were never implemented by some parties to the conflict. In a similar situation the Security Council would have risen to the occasion and attempted to enforce the implementation of its resolutions, but Council politics have prevented this organ from taking the appropriate action. On the other hand, the lack of political will has resulted in delayed action in situations where the Council should have acted promptly and swiftly — for example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the Security Council has consistently failed to take decisions commensurate with developments on the ground. This is particularly critical now that we are finally witnessing the withdrawal of foreign troops, but without an effective deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to fill the vacuum. It is obvious that the decision to enhance MONUC's strength should have been taken in a timely fashion to avoid this dangerous situation. If we want to further improve the Security Council's record, we should pay much more attention to these aspects.

Our collective efforts to improve the working methods of the Security Council should be geared towards the democratization, transparency, accountability and openness of the Council. We are disturbed by the increasing rumours that in matters deemed to be very serious or of utmost importance, there has been a clear division in the Security Council's membership. At a time when the Council seems to be making strides towards opening itself up to the wider United Nations membership through open debates and briefings, we have been increasingly hearing that non-permanent members are marginalized as the five permanent members consult privately among themselves, reach a consensus and sell it to the others as a fait accompli. This situation creates a climate of discomfort and can put in jeopardy the credibility of the Council. There should not be members of Council of the first or second category. Consultations among Council members should be done in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, preferably with the participation of the wider membership of the Organization, which will strengthen its credibility as a guardian of world peace and security.

The democratization, transparency and openness of the Security Council should therefore be at the heart of the Council's reform. This entails addressing the current composition of the Council to reflect the prevailing reality of the international community. This can only be achieved through the enlargement of the Council. In reviewing the composition of the Security Council, the criteria for enlargement should not be restrictive, but rather, representative and equitable. Thus, we should not only be oriented by the military and economic power of the candidates. Other elements, such as moral authority and equitable geographical representation, should be duly considered. Therefore, we should also be cognizant of the fact that developing countries deserve fair representation in the Council.

In the current composition of the Security Council, Africa is the most under-represented continent, a situation that needs to be addressed. We reiterate the African position, contained in the 1997

Harare Declaration of the Organization of African Unity, that our continent be allocated two permanent seats, with rights equal to those of the current permanent members, as well as two additional non-permanent seats. This would allow Africa its fair share of the membership of the Security Council.

Phasing out the power of the veto could also further democratization. The right of veto has been an unjust unilateral privilege that has curtailed the legitimacy of the Council. Its abusive use, or threat of use, has virtually paralysed the Council and contributed to the erosion of the Council's effectiveness. Therefore, my delegation concurs with those delegations that argue that it should be phased out.

We are approaching a decade of fruitless debate on the reform of the Security Council. It may be high time we rethink the whole process. Democratization of the Security Council is a must and we should all show flexibility towards that end.

Mr. Lamba (Malawi): Let me start by offering Malawi's heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Indonesia and to all the bereaved families affected by the bombing tragedy four days ago that took about 200 innocent lives. This unacceptable and sad event once again attests to the growing level of terrorism increasingly threatening global security today.

The delegation of Malawi extends its thanks to the President for this opportunity to join other speakers in this debate on the report of the Security Council. As we consider the Council's report, contained in documents A/57/2 and A/57/2/Corr.1, let me compliment the Council for a comprehensive document, covering the period from 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002. The Council has provided a clear and elaborate catalogue of its work and performance during the period under consideration. An attempt has been made to make the report conform to the presentation guidelines contained in document S/2002/199, of 26 February 2002. In addition, the report's analytical summary is a very useful feature.

In recognizing the performance of the Security Council through this report, to what extent has the Council delivered on our expectations? The answer may be difficult. But, operating within the current Charter of the United Nations, could that performance have been otherwise without contravening its long established traditional rules of procedure? These questions introduce a dimension touching on the need for revisiting the structure and operational regulations of the Council.

For several years now, the issue of Security Council reform, and, indeed of the United Nations system, has exercised our minds, in the spirit of democratic regeneration. It is my hope that debates of the nature we are holding today will enrich our ideas about the most appropriate model for the Security Council in a changing world.

Since the end of the 1980s, when the idea of reform of the Security Council began to gain currency, many events have taken place on the international scene and many political and armed conflicts have occurred. The Security Council has played its crucial role in addressing such destabilization through peace mediation, peacekeeping and even peace-building. Since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group by General Assembly resolution 48/26, of 3 December 1993, to engage in the reform of the Security Council, much effort has been made in that direction. It is no accident that increasing the membership of the Security Council was identified as one of the first crucial issues in the reform process. In fact, the Group's initial task was to examine the question of numerical increase and equitable representation on the Security Council. From 1994, when the Group began to meet, the General Assembly has remained seized of the results of the Group's deliberations.

Major areas isolated so far in the deliberation surrounding the Security Council reform include the Council's working methods as they pertain to transparency, its decision-making process, including the veto; numerical expansion of the Council at both the permanent and non-permanent levels of membership; and establishing a review mechanism for the performance of an expanded Security Council.

Since the signing of the United Nations Charter in 1945, the Security Council, as one of the main organs of the Organization, has sometimes been described as rather too conservative and insensitive to changing global circumstances in its working methods. Created at the end of the Second World War and composed exclusively of the victor nations as its five permanent members, the Security Council represents a minority empowered to make important and crucial decisions for the majority in the maintenance of international peace

and security. Some have seen the Security Council as the punitive hand of the victor nations. That basic charge has pointed to the absence of transparency in decision-making. In that regard, let me commend the Security Council for some positive developments in its work that are evident not only in the President's daily press briefing and the publication of the advance monthly timetable of Council meetings, but also in the occasional public debates on various important regional and international issues that are open to all Member States. That public interaction must be encouraged and institutionalized to enhance transparency and accountability. Of equal importance is the growing closer relationship and synergy between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in dealing with matters common to both organs.

The current practice by the President of the Council to brief non-members needs to continue. In the same vein of accountability, the active involvement of the elected members of the Council in informal consultations related to regional and international issues is necessary, and will only increase the legitimacy of Council's decisions and afford greater accountability. Member States, through their permanent missions to the United Nations, would consider it a significant development to receive summaries of the President's briefings to non-members.

Wide concern continues to be expressed about the desirability of numerical expansion and the need for equitable representation in the Security Council to promote efficient reinforcement of the Council's functions. The present status quo has changed little since 1945. Some improvements have been registered in areas such as the presence of non-permanent representation in the Council. However, maintaining the membership at its current size cannot effectively and adequately cater to current global interests or the requirements necessary to promote a democratic culture. To that end, Malawi reiterates the position of the African Union that seeks to redress this unsatisfactory situation.

Urgent consideration must be given to increasing the number of both permanent and non-permanent Council seats. Malawi supports the African Union position, enunciated in the 1993 Harare Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, which advocated a numerical shift in Security Council membership from 15 to 26 to members, in line with the expanding number of States joining the United Nations, whose total membership now stands at 191. New Council members should be drawn from both developed and developing countries.

In that regard, the African position does not favour any increase restricted to the non-permanent category alone. Genuine reform must entail numerical changes in both the permanent and non-permanent sides, to adequately reflect the interests and realities of both developed and developing countries. The suggested total of 26 should be elected on the basis of equitable geographical representation to ensure more effective sharing of collective responsibility in the monitoring and maintenance of international peace. The enormous attention and engagement of the Security Council by African issues in recent years justifies the need for increased African membership in the Council. Malawi reiterates and fully endorses the African Union proposal for a minimum of two new permanent seats and a total of five non-permanent seats for the African continent in the expanded Council. The two permanent seats for Africa would be filled by a system of rotation devised by the Africans themselves. It is the expectation that new members so added to the Security Council shall enjoy the same powers and prerogatives as those already in position.

Representation for both the permanent and non-permanent seats will respond to equitable regional and geographical imperatives.

The veto powers of the Security Council have raised the perennial concern as preventing a democratic approach in the work of the Security Council. While the prerogative of veto is enshrined in the United Nations Charter of 1945, the many years since then have reduced its relevance in an Organization built on the tenets of freedom and democracy. A re-examination and phasing out of the veto power, therefore, commands an important place in the Council's reform, in defence of democracy and equality of sovereign States. Until the phasing out is complete, the proposed new permanent members of the Security Council must share veto powers. It is my delegation's belief that a reformed posture of the Security Council must operate under a periodic review every ten years to monitor effectiveness and suggest any fresh revitalization. This process rests on the important need for flexibility.

The 21st century demands unparalleled courage as we consider these bold suggestions for reform to

give future impetus to the Security Council and indeed, the General Assembly, as well as the United Nations as a whole. We need to articulate vibrantly the dynamic of inclusiveness in our work. Reform is impossible without structural change and yet reform represents a crucial ingredient of an organization's success and productivity.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to underscore the importance of the United Nations, indeed, the Security Council, as irreplaceable in the maintenance of world peace and security. The suggested reform measures, which would call for a properly designed implementation schedule, are meant to lead to an improved structure and procedures of the Council in order for it to keep pace with the changing times. It is reform meant to meet what Italy has called general expectations of democracy, universality and inclusiveness to effectively meet the global challenges of the 21st century.

The United Nations and the Security Council hold the last best hope for peace on earth, which must justifiably be defended. Reform will increase the pace towards the realization of a world better equipped to bring about peace and security. Let us proceed with courage and selfless interest.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): Let me begin by expressing our solidarity with the Government and people of Indonesia in the wake of the terrible events in Bali. We strongly condemn this terrorist attack that caused the loss of so many innocent lives. We request Indonesian authorities to convey our deep felt condolences to the families of the victims, among which there were Brazilians.

The discussion of the report of the Security Council is the reaffirmation of the General Assembly's responsibilities in matters of genuine concern for the entire membership. It is not a mere formality. The performance of the Security Council during the past 12 months entails a mixed review.

On the positive side, we may illustrate with the successful developments in Timor-Leste and Angola. We may also mention the prompt response to the challenge posed by terrorism. By contrast, the Council's deliberations seemed to have little impact in other parts of Africa.

In the Middle East, the adoption of four consecutive resolutions by the Security Council was not forceful enough to cause any palpable change in the situation. The challenge here is how to really assert the collective responsibility that falls on the United Nations, and in particular on the Security Council, in resuming the peace process and establishing a viable path to restore hope and security for all peoples in the region.

While we support the efforts by the Quartet and the initiatives by the leaders of the region, it is our view that the Security Council can and must do more.

It should actively pursue the resumption of a political process engaging all parties in the region. It should consider the possibility of a monitoring presence on the ground to help implement the agreements reached between the parties and ensure adequate protection of civilians in the occupied territories. The Council should also take a more determined approach and resort to all mechanisms within its purview to ensure implementation of decisions adopted.

We reaffirm that coercive measures can only be applied with explicit authorization of the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter. In any case, the use of force must be commensurate with the threats posed to international peace and security.

The fact that Iraq or any other Member State may so blatantly disregard decisions passed by the Council is a matter of concern for the Organization and not without consequences for the maintenance of international peace and security. We are stating our views on this delicate matter of the Security Council this afternoon in the Council, in a timely convened open debate.

We welcome the innovations of content and format contained in the report submitted by the Council this year, but the report still fails to reflect the complexity and importance of the Security Council's work. It continues to be more a compendium of decisions taken, than an accurate account of discussions held. It is only legitimate for the General Assembly to receive more information on the decision-making process and on individual positions held within the Council. We also believe that the Security Council should provide special reports to the Assembly as provided for in Article 24 (3) of the Charter.

We welcome the fact that, over the past few years, the Security Council has significantly improved

its methods of work. It has become more transparent, offering greater opportunities for the wider membership of the United Nations to participate in its discussions. Greater efficiency and effectiveness normally act in tandem with improved transparency. This is also true for the new mechanisms for consultations with troop-contributing countries.

We commend the holding of monthly wrap-up sessions, even though some members of the Council still persist in being sceptical about them. Such sessions bring more transparency and synergy to the work of the Council.

Let me note however that to a large extent, these positive developments remain to be institutionalized. Also, there is additional room for improvement. Non-members should be invited on a more regular basis to attend briefings given by the Secretariat.

We are also in favour of some degree of institutionalization of the informal consultations of the whole. The Security Council continues to conduct most of its business in closed meetings, many times in clear circumvention of Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter. It also takes actual decisions, including decisions with very important budgetary implications, in the absolute informality of closed consultations.

Incidentally, the Security Council seems to have no limits for the expenses it mandates which entail budgetary consequences for the entire membership. Council members often take decisions without the full knowledge of their financial implications. We believe that it would be useful to consider adopting in the Council a practice similar to the General Assembly's statements of programme budget implications. These estimates of expenses should clearly indicate the activities to be covered with mandatory contributions, with trust funds or extrabudgetary resources.

If there is one area where immediate change is required, it is in relation to the perceived exclusion of elected members in discussions conducted within the Council. The active contribution of elected members must be factored into all decisions of the Council from the time of their inception.

I will turn now to matters arising out of the report (A/56/47) of the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council. It is paramount that the Security Council be perceived as a body of unquestioned credibility and legitimacy in order for it to be able to properly exert its authority. The present composition of the Council does not adequately reflect the new realities of the world, the increased membership of the Organization or the enhanced role of developing countries in world affairs.

There is widespread agreement on the need for expansion of the Council, and the great majority of Member States support an enlargement in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members. Brazil believes that equitable representation in the Council can be achieved only through an enlargement in both categories, with new permanent members from developed and developing countries, increasing the total number of members of the Council to a figure in the mid-twenties.

Brazil favours a curtailment of the veto, with a view to its gradual elimination. As a first step, the veto should be limited to decisions taken under chapter VII of the Charter.

We also support provision for a periodic review so as to ensure that changes on which we may decide now will not remain in force for eternity.

We all share a deep sense of frustration with the fact that our efforts towards reforming the Security Council remain stalled, particularly with respect to cluster I issues. As we look into possible ways to carry this exercise forward, we turn again to the President of the General Assembly. His active leadership is key to the entire process.

May I suggest once more that we should by all means avoid engaging in yet another round of general discussion. It is time to start distilling conclusions from the debate held over the past 10 years and to prepare the ground for decisions capable of giving a clear sense of direction to the reform process.

As the next step, we should try to reach agreement on the actual size of a reformed Security Council. Based on this, we could start working on possible models for expansion of the Council, so that a comprehensive package can be designed in the foreseeable future.

As Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in his report on strengthening of the United Nations system, "no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council" (*A/57/387, para. 20*).

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to express our gratitude for the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group to reach agreement on appropriate ways to strengthen the role of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security. We also thank the Secretariat for its efforts in preparing the report of the Security Council (A/57/2) in its new format.

"Report of the Security Council" and "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters" are two of the most important items on the agenda of the General Assembly because of the Security Council's fundamental and vital role in the maintenance of international peace and security, based on the principles of the United Nations Charter. The United Arab Emirates agrees with the report of the Security Council on the progress the Council has made in its working methods over the past few years, such as holding more public meetings, providing more opportunities for non-member States to participate in the Council's activities, and the provision of briefings for the open membership of the United Nations. We also appreciate the broadening of the scope of issues and concerns considered by the Council; these include issues of peace and security, such as peacekeeping, women and armed conflict, the role of women in peacemaking, children and armed conflict, and terrorism. The Security Council has succeeded in drawing attention to these issues and has achieved remarkable progress, especially in the field of combating terrorism.

In spite of the progress achieved in a number of procedural and substantive matters, it is regrettable that the Security Council has failed to resolve some fundamental issues that are at the core of its responsibility as an international organ: ending aggression and foreign occupation, peacemaking and the maintenance of peace and security. This is because double standards, the lack of equitable representation and the veto power of some nations allow those nations to make vital decisions that affect the lives of entire peoples.

The Working Group's discussions over the past nine years stressed the dire need to restructure the Security Council and to enhance the transparency of its work. All working papers presented by States, organizations and regional groups agreed on the importance of reforming the Council in order to strengthen and enhance its role in maintaining international peace and security, and to improve its efficiency in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. They also stressed the ongoing increase in the membership of the United Nations. The number of United Nations Members has more than tripled since the founding of the Organization; accordingly, it is logical to increase the membership of the Security Council in a way that is proportionate to the increase in the number of United Nations Member States, as well as to the increase in its political and security concerns.

However, in spite of agreement among Member States on the principle of change and reform, the Working Group has been unable to reach agreement on the nature of the changes required in respect of the membership of the Council and the Council's working methods and procedures.

The United Arab Emirates is very concerned about strengthening the role of the United Nations and its principal organs — in particular the Security Council, through restructuring the Council and enhancing the principles of transparency and objectivity in its working methods and its resolutions. In that context, the United Arab Emirates calls for: first, supporting and implementing the principle of increasing the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council to a degree that would enhance its efficiency and effectiveness in adopting resolutions and taking action against conflicts that threaten international peace security. Such an increase would be in conformity with the principles of the sovereign equality of Member States and equitable geographical representation, and it would be in line with the universality of the Council.

Secondly, any new proposed format for restructuring the Security Council, and any increase in its membership, must take into consideration the present imbalance with respect to the representation of the developing countries, with a view to rectifying the imbalance in the geographical representation and enhancing political balance in the Council.

Thirdly, we call for the allocation of a permanent Council seat to the countries of the Arab Group, with occupancy based on rotation and coordination among the Arab countries, in accordance with the rules followed by the League of Arab States and within the framework of the Asian and African Groups.

Fourthly, in the event of agreement on an increase in the number of permanent seats in the Security Council, those seats must be allocated to States which have proved, in their relations with the United Nations, their commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security, and their fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the Charter in the whole range of political, economic and social fields. We call for the election of those States by the General Assembly, in accordance with criteria and procedures to be agreed upon.

Finally, we must define limits and restrictions on the use of the right of veto and adopt the constructive proposals that have been presented in that regard with a view to agreeing on terms that are acceptable to all parties, in order to guarantee that the Council is neutral and objective in carrying out its responsibilities and to prevent the policies of partiality and double standards employed by some permanent members of the Council.

The United Arab Emirates is greatly disappointed at the Security Council's failure to ensure the implementation of its resolutions related to the situation in the Middle East, particularly the Palestinian question. The Palestinian people are being subjected daily to killings and genocide by the Israeli occupying forces, without any intervention by the Council to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with all previous Council resolutions related to the Palestinian question. Israel continues to carry out massacres against innocent civilians and to damage the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority, violating all international laws and human rights instruments, foremost among which is the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. However, the Council is doing nothing to force Israel to comply with its resolutions, the most recent of which was resolution 1435 (2002). Israel has publicly defied that resolution, despite the demand by all Council members that it be implemented. The Council has been unable to impose its authority on Israel, so it has resorted to changing and sometimes cancelling its resolutions, as was the case with Council resolution 1405 (2002), related to sending a fact-finding team to Jenin, in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In that context, we demand that the Security Council, as the principal body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, shoulder its responsibilities in that regard and use its authority to ensure the full implementation of all its resolutions, in particular those related to the situation in the Middle East and to the Palestinian question. The goal would be to maintain international peace and security and to put an end to the shedding of the blood of innocent civilians, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we hope that our debate on this item will lead to tangible progress towards needed reform in the Council's structure and an increase in equitable representation in its membership, in order to enhance its credibility and its fundamental role in maintaining international peace and security.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to begin with a word of praise for the efforts that have been undertaken this year, particularly by Ambassador Mahbubani and his team, to shorten and make more substantive the report of the Security Council (A/57/2). We find the analytical summary, written by way of an introduction, to be particularly interesting. It attests to the high degree of Council activity during the past year.

The Council swiftly and effectively met the numerous challenges with which it was confronted, particularly that of the fight against terrorism after the attacks of 11 September 2001. The daunting nature of that challenge was again in evidence in last weekend's attack in Bali. My delegation resolutely condemns that attack and expresses its sincere condolences to the Indonesian and Australian delegations as well as to the families of the victims.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that the various conflict situations in Africa rightly continued to be the subject of much attention by the Council over the past year. We encourage the Council to increase that attention and its activity on the ground, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My delegation also notes that the working group on sanctions has resumed its work, under the current chairmanship of Ambassador Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon. That is an issue to which my delegation attaches great importance. Indeed, it is urgent that we draw lessons from the many studies and analyses carried out in recent years on the issue of sanctions. In

particular, we need to improve the functioning of various mechanisms for following up on existing sanctions regimes. Belgium hopes that the working group will formulate concrete recommendations in that regard.

My delegation welcomes the progress made with respect to Council's working methods, which are moving in the direction of greater transparency. Like the Secretary-General, I believe it would be useful to codify the new practices thus developed. And we could go even further, for example, with regard to coordination with troop-contributing countries, which should be more substantial.

Reform of the Security Council is a subject of particular interest to us. In fact, it is of the utmost importance to guarantee the long-term legitimacy and effectiveness of that organ, because we are all aware of its crucial responsibilities with regard to peace and security. The credibility of the whole United Nations system is at stake.

Belgium regrets that the work of the Open-ended Working Group charged with considering all aspects of Security Council reform made little progress during the fifty-sixth session of the Assembly. However, we remain convinced that a solution is possible. As members are aware, Belgium, with a group of other countries that share that conviction, has introduced pragmatic proposals with a view to enlarging the two categories of Council members as well as limiting the exercise of the right of the veto. We are convinced that those are necessary elements for achieving balanced and realistic reform that will meet the wishes of the vast majority of Member States.

We have all the ingredients, so to speak, and a relatively precise idea of what the recipe could be. What is missing is the political will to move forward — to take the necessary steps to bring positions closer together. We all know that enlarging the Council and the issue of the use of the right of veto continue to be areas of disagreement. But there is no disagreement that cannot be overcome if we really have the will to achieve a result and to make the necessary compromises. That is why, above all, a political approach is required at this stage.

I should like to encourage the President of the Assembly to pursue that path and during this session to take the initiatives that are required. Certainly, the task will not be easy, but the stakes are high. The Assembly can count on my delegation's determined support in this undertaking.

Mr. Gansukh (Mongolia): First of all, I should like to join previous speakers in expressing our condolences to the Governments and the peoples of Indonesia and of other countries whose citizens lost their lives in the terrorist attack on the resort island of Bali. That indiscriminate massacre of innocent civilians clearly demonstrates the danger that international terrorism poses to world peace and tranquillity, and it is yet another call for urgent and effective action to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

My delegation, like many other preceding speakers, welcomes the improved format and concise presentation of the Council's report. We are particularly grateful for the analytical accounts introduced for the first time in the annual report. Taken together, these changes give a clearer view of the Council's work, thus offering an opportunity to reflect more profoundly on and to make deeper analyse of the workings of the Security Council as a whole

Speaking of the annual report, I share the views of Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore on the need to formulate a set of agreed criteria that could be used to evaluate the performance of the Security Council. My delegation believes that the initial four questions proposed by the Ambassador could serve as the basis for the further elaboration and development of criteria acceptable to all interested delegations.

The year under review, as indicated in the report, was the busiest in the history of Security Council. Along with its new responsibilities following from the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001), the Council was fully committed to the establishment of an Interim Authority in Afghanistan, providing security in Kabul and its surrounding areas The United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor, under the Council's mandate, helped in establishing an independent State of East Timor. The Security Council was engaged in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building activities from the horn of Africa to the Great Lakes region. Many other important issues related to the Middle East, Iraq, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, counter-terrorism and peacekeeping, among others, were discussed by the Council or kept under its constant review.

The deterioration of the overall situation in the Middle East is still a major cause of concern. However, even in that region, a foundation has been laid down for achieving lasting peace within the framework of relevant Security Council resolutions. Though peace in many parts of Africa remains fragile, signs of national reconciliation and political will to achieve the peaceful settlement of the disputes are evident.

The Security Council, while grappling with the pressing aforementioned issues, has nonetheless been able to improve significantly its working methods, in terms of both quantity and quality. The activities of the Council have become more transparent and it now offers wider opportunities for participation by non-Security Council members in its deliberations. The monthly wrap-up meetings provide a good opportunity for interactive discussions among members and non-members of the Council.

We welcome the increasing frequency of public meetings and briefings. Here, I would like to cite Ambassador Levitte of France, who, speaking on 26 September about the Security Council's working methods, made the following observation:

> "[W]e can see that we have gone from a period of hibernation to a period of increasingly rapid development". (*S/PV.4616, p. 7*)

My delegation wholeheartedly welcomes those changes, which bring vitality to the Council's work and increase the credibility of the Organization as a whole. Nevertheless, we believe that further efforts should be made to enhance transparency and increase the efficiency of the working methods of the Security Council.

While we share the frustration of many on the lack of tangible progress with regard to equitable representation on and increase in the Security Council's membership, we attribute the difficulties to the politically sensitive nature of the problem. We hope that the Working Group will continue its search for the solution of this problem. Like many others, we continue to believe that the expansion of the Council should be made in both categories, permanent and non-permanent.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): Allow me at the outset to join other speakers in extending our heartfelt condolences to the people and Government of Indonesia, as well as to other countries that lost many of their citizens, and to condemn in the strongest terms the unspeakable act committed by terrorists on the island of Bali against innocent civilians.

Let me express my delegation's appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon, for his introduction, as well as to the delegations of the United Kingdom and Singapore for their valuable contribution to the annual report of the Security Council. Likewise, may I take this opportunity to congratulate Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on their election as new non-permanent members of the Council.

Hungary welcomes the decision to cluster the two items on today's agenda and we sincerely hope that this kind of streamlining of the General Assembly's debates will lead to a more efficient use of our valuable time. My delegation is pleased to acknowledge that this year's report shows some noticeable improvements both in quantity and in quality. The document is significantly shorter and its introductory part finally provides us with some idea of how members of the Council see the evolution of major issues on their agenda during a period that the report calls one of the busiest 12 months in the history of that body. On the other hand, this introduction was far from being able to provide a real analysis of the events and the Council's responses, while its 290 pages are also too long by far compared to the 39 pages of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, a document that, during last year's debate, many Member States considered to be a standard to be followed.

The Security Council has had important successes during the reporting period. Its prompt and adequate responses to the terrorist attack of 11 September brought worldwide appreciation and strengthened its credibility and cohesiveness. We also commend the outstanding performance of its newly established Counter-Terrorism Committee and the way it engages the entire membership of the United Nations in the global struggle against the scourge of terrorism. Assisting Timor-Leste in its transition to full independence, managing the phasing out of the mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina and overseeing the implementation of the substantial autonomy granted to the people of Kosovo are just a few of the achievements the Council certainly deserves credit for.

Hungary would like to place on record its appreciation for the increased transparency of the

Council's operation in recent years. The growing number of public meetings means more access to the information provided by the Secretariat and gives further opportunities to non-Council members to express their views as well. However, these lengthy meetings often tend to be mere reiterations of well-known national positions, repetitive statements without a real dialogue on the topic itself. From time to time, one has the feeling that these open meetings are more and more becoming mandatory tasks, political chores to be endured by members and non-members alike. Expectations are gradually decreasing and thus there are rarely significant results. The Council has numerous meeting formats at its disposal. It is unfortunate that the practice of holding open private meetings with the participation of interested delegations upon written request seems to be loosing support within the Security Council. We are of the opinion that those private meetings can still provide non-Council members with valuable insight into the real working of that body.

The evolving practice of meetings with troop-contributing countries before a peacekeeping mandate is renewed is highly appreciated by all concerned. However, those meetings often do not amount to much more than a brief review of the already public official report of the Secretary-General on a specific peacekeeping mission, and they often fail to provide additional details that sometimes could prove particularly important to Member States sending their troops to faraway countries, putting them in harm's way. It remains our strong belief that the troop-contributing Governments have the right and duty to be well informed about different aspects and the politico-military context of a mission and, undoubtedly, the best sources for that are the Security Council and the Secretariat.

An adequate flow of information to non-members of the Council is a necessary prerequisite for understanding the Council's activity, its policies and endeavours; it is a sine qua non condition for Governments to be able to lend political support when it is needed. The present situation is still far from being fully satisfactory. We commend the work of those who maintain the home page of the presidency of the Security Council with the usually up-to-date programme of work and recent statements and decisions. On the other hand, we find it regrettable that that home page is not used to convey accurate schedule information to delegations, such as warnings about unscheduled meetings or consultations of the Council, as the telephone service set up for that purpose does not seem to satisfy expectations either.

We consider it a legitimate right of every Member State to have access to basic information in due time, even if the consultations of the Council have an informal character. Our interest usually does not depend on the format of a meeting, but rather on its substance. Therefore, we call on those concerned to find a solution to that problem. A better use of the fastest channel, the Internet, may prove to be a useful option to consider. Furthermore, it would be appropriate to reinvigorate the previous practice of daily informal briefings by the President on the current work of the Council for interested non-members, for which, according to the *Journal of the United Nations*, a separate room has been assigned. However, in reality such briefings rarely take place.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters remains one of the issues of fundamental importance for the membership of the world Organization. In the Millennium Declaration, our heads of States and Governments agreed to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects, and that can rightfully be regarded as an unambiguous mandate for all of us.

In spite of all efforts carried out before and after the Millennium Summit in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group, it is rather frustrating to see the lack of meaningful progress on the issue of the enlargement of the Security Council. As is correctly noted in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the recent session of the General Assembly on the strengthening of the United Nations, "no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council" (*A/57/387/para. 20*). Hungary shares that view entirely and has been consistently calling for a reform resulting in a Council that reflects the new political and economic realities of the world, in the form of being more representative and more democratic, thus gaining more legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the international community. There is a compelling need for such a reform, since the complex and difficult situations in the world at large further increase the responsibility of the Security

Council in discharging its obligations under the Charter.

Hungary continues to pursue two basic aspirations in the efforts related to the reform of the Security Council: the need to adjust the Council's size and composition to accord with today's changed political realities, as well as the need to maintain and further its working capability and efficiency. Starting from that perspective, Hungary favours the enlargement of the Council in both categories of membership.

We are convinced that having Germany and Japan, as well as countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, among the new permanent members of the Council would certainly reinforce its overall credibility. Likewise, the significant growth in the membership of the United Nations over the decades also justifies an adequate increase in the non-permanent membership of the Council, thus providing a more balanced composition and a better representation of medium-size and small States.

We do not see enlargement as a goal per se. It should result in a more credible and more legitimate decision-making process. Future enlargement has to be matched with the need to maintain and improve the efficiency of the Council as well. Hungary regrets that an agreement on the formula that would allow for an increase in the Council's membership still seems to be rather remote. However, Hungary remains open to any useful suggestions and stands ready to work with all other Member States to remedy that situation.

Hungary recognizes and appreciates the positive changes and progress achieved in the operation of the Council. We are pleased to see that a number of ideas and proposals that have been expressed by Member States in the Open-ended Working Group are already reflected in the everyday practice of the Council's operation. As I mentioned before, more transparent work of the Council, an increase in the number of open meetings and better cooperation with the troop-contributing countries should definitely be welcomed as important steps in the right direction.

Security Council reform has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for nearly a decade, and, once again, the report of the Open-ended Working Group contains very few new developments. We regret that agreement could not be reached on major issues and that there has been no real breakthrough in that long, overdue process that is so vital to the whole international community. We are fully aware that finding the common denominator among all Member States, with sometimes such diverse interests, is certainly not an easy task. It requires further persistent efforts, as well as small but practical steps and new innovative approaches. If we want to make our Organization more responsive and more efficient in tackling the global challenges we are facing, we can hardly have the luxury of stopping progress in that direction.

Finally, we would like to encourage the President to make fresh efforts in order to further that process, in line with the direct mandate he has received from the highest level at the Millennium Summit. I can assure him that he will have the full cooperation of the Hungarian delegation in that endeavour.

Ms. Novotna (Slovakia): Allow me to begin by expressing our deeply felt condolences to the people and Government of Indonesia and to the families of the victims from all over the world on the devastating tragedy that took place in Bali, Indonesia.

I wish to thank the current President of the Security Council, Ambassador Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon, for having presented this year's report of the Security Council.

Slovakia is pleased with the decisions of the General Assembly to take up items 11 and 40 jointly, since the substance of both those items are clearly interrelated. We believe that, in order to make significant advances in the direction of the Security Council's effectiveness, a debate on essential changes leading to the reform of the Council is needed. That is also the only way the credibility of the Council can be improved.

A large number of heads of State and Government noted at the Millennium Summit and at the subsequent sessions of the General Assembly that Security Council reform is a very important task in strengthening the United Nations.

The Secretary-General also stated in his recent report that a significant reform of our Organization is needed and

> "that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council". (*A/57/387, para. 20*)

We welcome his exhortation to Member States with this statement to move ahead in the discussion of this important issue. In our view, it is imperative to strengthen the functions of the United Nations by reforming the Security Council in order for the United Nations to effectively tackle new challenges, such as international terrorism, which are becoming increasingly varied and more complex.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Slovak Republic, like the overwhelming majority of Member States, supports Security Council reform that would enhance its representative character, improve its working methods and the transparency of its work, as well as preserve the Council's ability to act promptly. The expansion of the Security Council would be the only logical consequence of the political reality of the world today and the increase of the membership in the United Nations. As it is now, let me simply state that the Security Council is no longer fully representative of the contemporary international community.

Slovakia supports an expansion of the Security Council in both categories, permanent and non-permanent. In addition to the new permanent members from the so-called industrialized countries, the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America should also be given permanent membership in that important decision-making body. The Group of Eastern European States, whose membership has more than doubled over the last 10 years, should not be omitted in the enlargement process of the Security Council in the category of non-permanent members. In concrete numbers, Slovakia supports the idea of increasing the number of Security Council members from today's 15 to 25.

Slovakia believes that it is not far from reality and that it is very realistic to expect that a consensus can be reached regarding the need for an increase in both categories. It would also be realistic to expect that all permanent members should have the equal veto right. It is not realistic to expect the veto to be abolished, but it is realistic, in our view, to expect that it may be limited and its use made more transparent.

Before concluding, let me congratulate the newly elected members of the Security Council — Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain — and express our hope that they will relentlessly work for the just cause of international peace and security. We surely realize that the Security Council may not be able to resolve all conflicts, but we, as Members of the United Nations, and all of us as human beings have reason to expect that the Council will at all times make a serious effort to stop human suffering resulting from threats to peace, no matter where they occur.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The new format adopted this year by the Security Council for its annual report to the General Assembly represents significant progress over reports submitted in past years. The introduction, though more descriptive than analytical, has the advantage of being concise and concrete. It is particularly useful because it provides a brief, although perhaps overly schematic summary of the Council's activities in the 12 months that it covers.

The change in the report's format is another sign of the Security Council's readiness to become a more effective, transparent and participatory organ. Other changes introduced recently in its working methods are in the same vein, such as the increase in the number of open meetings in which non-member States can participate, as well as the holding of wrap-up sessions and the convening of consultations with countries that contribute troops to peacekeeping operations. The latter question is of the greatest interest to Uruguay, which not only has consistently contributed contingents for over 50 years, but is currently the country providing the highest percentage of military and civilian personnel in relation to its population.

Uruguay enthusiastically welcomes all these changes, which benefit not only all the States that are not members of the Council, but also the Council itself, as its legitimacy and credibility are thereby enhanced. However, meetings held behind closed doors are still too numerous. In many cases, the drafting and negotiation of resolutions take place in secret; as a result, those of us that are not Council members but are bound by its resolutions often do not have a clear idea of the reasons for and objectives of its actions.

That is why my delegation feels that, as the Permanent Representative of Colombia, Ambassador Valdivieso, said in the Council, these changes should be viewed as one phase of

> "a permanent process of creating a product suited to the demands of the Members of the Organization". (*S/PV.4616, p.21*)

In other words, these are the initial steps that will lead us — I hope, in the very near future — to the type of report that may give us a complete picture of the status of the international problems on the Council's agenda. This will be achieved when the report ceases to be merely descriptive, such as that under consideration, and when it contains elements of analysis and evaluations of results. We are aware that this will involve a more complicated task, but I believe that it is not beyond the Council's capacities to accomplish this.

The report should contain, inter alia, a brief summary of the monthly wrap-up meetings; an assessment of the effectiveness of measures applied and instruments used in individual cases to ensure the maintenance or restoration of peace and security, as well as of the manner in which sanctions are implemented, their effectiveness and effects; and, in particular, more information on the degree to which the resolutions adopted are implemented by the States bound by them.

The latter aspect is of particular concern to my delegation. In the report before us, mention is made of a lack of compliance with certain resolutions that the Council has adopted in connection with several conflicts. It is Uruguay's understanding that the monitoring mechanisms may need to be strengthened. In any event, it would be appropriate to consider new procedures or mechanisms to induce States to comply with resolutions, particularly when the States that are not in compliance are parties to a conflict or in some way directly linked to it. It does not seem reasonable for the Council to remain passive and to let time go by without its mandates being fulfilled by the countries bound by them.

At the very least, the Council should broadly publicize these situations of non-compliance, providing the General Assembly with updated and consistent information on these violations, in special reports to be submitted in accordance with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. This would this allow the Assembly not only to know which of its members are disobeying Council resolutions, but ultimately to make recommendations or in some way take a stand on this issue. That is completely within the General Assembly's sphere of competence. Let us recall that, in accordance with Article 12 of the Charter, the General Assembly is empowered to make recommendations, upon the request of the Security Council, concerning disputes or situations that the Council is considering.

The Security Council's activity in the period covered by the report was exceptionally intense and highly effective in some aspects, as we can see by the positive developments in a number of situations, including Sierra Leone, Angola and Timor-Leste. Similarly, we wish to highlight the effectiveness with which the Council has guided the fight against terrorism, as well as the commendable work that has been done by the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

This is the best evidence of the fact that, in a world in which the number and complexity of conflicts are on the increase, the United Nations remains the only legitimate alternative, the only real possibility of resolving these conflicts in a just and lasting manner. Any other action, whether it be of a preventive or coercive nature, taken outside the Organization, and therefore not having the legitimacy afforded by the consensus of the international community, represented by the Security Council, is likely to perpetuate conflicts or aggravate them.

As far as the consultations on the reform of the Council are concerned, we see no grounds for great optimism as to the possibility of making significant progress in the immediate future, particularly if consultations continue on the same proposals for reform that were made almost a decade ago.

It is true that the Open-ended Working Group has managed to make progress on certain secondary aspects that are described in great detail in the annual reports. Undoubtedly, its deliberations have contributed to the introduction of reforms in the working methods of the Council. But on the fundamental issue of the Council's composition, and on how it is going to be expanded, and on what the procedure will be for decision-making if it is expanded — on these matters we remain stuck at the same point where we were several years ago.

This deadlock is not due to a total lack of agreement within the Working Group. In this regard, it is worthwhile to underscore one of several paradoxical situations that characterize the consultations. It is, indeed, paradoxical that it has not been possible to formalize any agreement on the composition of the Council, despite the fact that, since the very beginning of the consultations, there has been consensus on the need to increase the number of non-permanent members. No State is opposed to the increase in non-permanent membership. Nonetheless, the Working

Group has not been able to formalize this consensus, because some States make it dependent on the acceptance of an increase in permanent members who would hold the right to veto, a question on which we are very far from having reached general agreement.

This is why years of consultations go by, one after another, without reform, a reform agreed on by everyone, a reform that undoubtedly meets the objective pursued by all States, without exception — in other words, an enhancement of the representative and democratic nature of the Council.

If, in the very first year that the Working Group began its work, this agreement had been put into practice — amending the Charter of the Organization — and, supposing that there had been an increase by 10 in the non-permanent membership, by today 50 Members of this Assembly would have been able to occupy their seats on the Council, in addition to those non-permanent members that have occupied seats on the Council in these 10 years under the Council's present composition. The expansion of the Council could have been implemented a long time ago without any prejudice to considering the possibility of other increases in the number of non-permanent members.

But, as I have said, this is not the only paradox that has characterized the consultations of the Working Group. Another paradoxical situation arises when a large number of members of the Group repeat, ad nauseam, as we all have done, that what they want is the democratization of the Security Council, that they want a Security Council which is more democratic, more representative and more transparent. And then, at the same time, they promote a formula for expansion of the Council that leads exactly to the opposite of this, since they propose an increase in the number of permanent members that would be given a privilege that is absolutely anti-democratic. By this I mean the right of veto. All the while affirming the need to make the Council a more democratic body, they are proposing changes to make it less democratic. The paradox becomes virtually incomprehensible when we see States proposing to extend the veto while they advocate its elimination at the same time.

In spite of the fact that the efforts made in the Working Group have not yielded results, Uruguay understands that we must persist. We remain confident in the Group, which is still the only appropriate forum for continuation of these consultations. Meanwhile, we understand that, in order to strengthen the prospects of reaching agreement on this subject, it is necessary to seek new bases for discussion.

We are convinced that it is possible to find institutional formulas which can meet the aspirations of certain States that are prepared to assume greater responsibilities by increasing their presence and their participation in the Security Council without, in this way, affecting either its democratic nature or its functioning.

Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus): At the outset, I would like to express our sincere condolences for the loss of life in beautiful Bali, Indonesia, due to terrorist attack.

We express our appreciation to Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon for presenting the report of the Security Council in a most lucid way. We note the ever-increasing demands on the Security Council for responses to conflicts, threats and breaches of peace, evidenced by more meetings, more resolutions and more presidential statements than last year.

The report, covering the period of 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002, deals mainly with questions considered by the Council under its primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security.

The United Nations Charter has conferred sweeping powers on the Council. No other organ can take mandatory decisions. Increasingly, it is occupying political ground at the expense of the Assembly, especially since the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States. However, although power has shifted dramatically in favour of the Security Council, the submission of the report to the General Assembly is in itself a reminder and evidence of the accountability of the Security Council to the Assembly and to the general membership of the United Nations, on behalf of which it acts.

We note with appreciation the updated format of the introductory part of the annual report on world problems. The texts, though brief, are indeed timely and informative. We also welcome the improvement in the working methods of the Security Council, although there is room for further transparency, as the report itself states. The increased number of open meetings, the monthly assessments by Council Presidents, the continuing briefings of non-member States and the

press by the President, the increased consultations with troop-contributing States and the general trend towards openness in the Council's meetings are having beneficial effects.

We note that on a number of questions there was progress. In other areas, the situation is more threatening than ever before, as is the case with international terrorism. We believe that the Security Council acted speedily and prudently in adopting two historic anti-terrorist resolutions aimed at the eradication of that scourge. Through its Counter-Terrorism Committee, established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001, the Security Council has set in motion, as the report states in the introduction, "an exercise of unprecedented intensity in combating a significant threat to global peace and security".

Regrettably, a number of long-standing problems on the agenda of the Security Council, including the question of Cyprus, remain unresolved, due to lack of political will and the refusal to implement mandatory resolutions and decisions of the Council. The obligation of all Member States to comply without exception with Security Council resolutions is a Charter provision which all States have undertaken to respect.

Non-implementation by the Security Council of its own resolutions erodes the Council's effectiveness and prestige. As the President of the Republic of Cyprus has said,

> "The effectiveness of this most important organ of the United Nations will be seriously compromised if it applies double standards. It must act in every case with determination and consistency".

First, in order to fully achieve its goals, the Council must be truly representative, reflecting in its membership and substance present realities. Reforms, especially increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent seats on the basis of equitable geographical distribution and in accordance with Article 23 of the Charter, will give the Council more legitimacy and render it more democratic, thus strengthening its effectiveness.

During the general debate, as well as in debates in plenary meeting on the all-important issue of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, Cyprus placed its views on record. Expansion of the Security Council is inevitable because it enjoys the support of all Member States. What is needed is the political will and flexibility to achieve an overwhelmingly supported agreement. We hope that with perseverance and diligence, by expanding the areas of concurrence in previous sessions of the Open-ended Working Group over the past decade, we will be making positive steps towards a generally acceptable agreement.

Secondly, it is self-evident that the United Nations must have sufficient funds and personnel so that, as the Secretary-General has said, it never lets down those who have placed their faith in it. No reform will be meaningful if the Council's mandatory resolutions remain unimplemented due to its inability to carry out its solemn decisions.

Finally, we have long held the view that the articles of the Charter relating to the system of collective security, as provided for in that document by the founding fathers, should, particularly in these complex times, be fully implemented by putting armed forces at the disposal of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

To further strengthen our Organization, the need for a close relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly — the two most important organs of the United Nations — cannot be overemphasized. To that same end, we also support greater collaboration between the United Nations and regional and other organizations, so long as the purpose is the promotion of goals set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the newly elected members of the Security Council, and to thank all Council members for their efforts for a just and lasting solution to the question of Cyprus on the basis of Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): I would like first of all to express, on behalf of my Government and on my own account, deep sympathy for the families who lost loved ones in the terrorist attack in Bali last Saturday. We express our solidarity with the Governments of Indonesia and of Australia. We condemn unequivocally that atrocious and inhuman act, which targeted innocent victims, and we hope that the perpetrators of the attack will soon be brought to justice.

My delegation joins others in thanking the President of the Security Council for introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/57/2). We subscribe fully to the statement that he made. We are grateful to our fellow members of the Council for their immense efforts, valuable suggestions and contributions in producing this year's report, which is more reader-friendly, much shorter, more focused and better organized than previous reports. Above all, the production of this year's report has resulted in substantial savings over previous years. We are thankful to the Permanent Representative of Singapore, Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani, for his tireless efforts and perseverance in persuading the Council to accept the new format of the report.

We have heard many speakers during the course of this debate refer to the imperative need for the reform of the United Nations and its organs. We share their views in many respects. We look forward to more concrete consultative work on these suggestions by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Relating to the Security Council.

On the question of enlargement, I would like to reiterate the position of Mauritius that, among others, India should occupy a permanent seat in the Security Council — a seat which it rightly deserves.

During the period July 2001 to June 2002, the Security Council continued to play its dedicated role of preventing cataclysmic conflicts among States and was actively involved in the improvement of new techniques to address the spate of intra-State conflicts. The Council has not only reacted to threats to international and regional peace and security, but it has also been proactive in dealing with problems affecting peace and security. The Council's swift and decisive response, in an attempt to mobilize international efforts against terrorism, through the adoption of a landmark resolution — resolution 1373 (2001) — was not only a historical achievement but has become a benchmark for the international community in the combat against all forms of terrorism. We pay tribute to Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for the commendable work he is doing as Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

In the course of this year, the Security Council had the opportunity to listen to a briefing by the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) — now the African Union (AU) — on conflict situations in Africa. Such a practice must continue in future to ensure proper consideration and coordination, as well as complementarity, given that the AU is now playing an even greater role at the regional level in the field of conflict resolution, prevention and management.

The Security Council also created an Ad Hoc Working Group on Africa, which has been of great assistance to the Council in dealing with particular issues and conflicts in Africa. We hope that the principle of maintaining the Working Group at the end of this year will not be questioned. We are also pleased that this year has seen an unprecedented collaboration between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Such cooperation is essential in creating a seamless transition from peacemaking to peace-building and peace consolidation. We hope that efforts to strengthen this relationship will continue, in the interest of the international community.

Mauritius will soon be completing its two-year term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. We have found this experience highly enriching and quite fulfilling. For us — a small country with a small Mission — the task was, without a doubt, difficult; but it was certainly worth it. As we are about to disembark from the train to which the Permanent Representative of Singapore alluded in his statement on Monday, it may be appropriate for me to share some views on our experience and to give some suggestions on how the role of the elected members can be further enhanced.

We have found in these two years that elected members are capable of playing a very important and constructive role in the work of the Security Council. The new challenges of the twenty-first century require collective decision-making, flexibility and readiness to make compromises at some point in order to achieve tangible results through consensus. Elected members bring credibility and balance to the work of the Security Council, just as they bring a breath of fresh air, which opens new perspectives in the process of dealing with problems facing the world.

Through their thematic debates, which they organize every now and then, they are able to open up

the work of the Security Council to newer issues of collective interest, and also to provide an opportunity to the wider membership of the United Nations to give their views on such issues.

By virtue of feeling answerable to the region which they represent, elected members consider it their duty to make the work of the Council more open and more transparent. We are pleased that, as was noted by the President of the Security Council in his statement, 277 formal meetings of the Security Council were held during the period under review, many of which were open public meetings. This trend, we believe, should continue, and more and more open meetings of the Council should be held on a broader range of issues.

Elected members have also been able to bring about substantial positive changes in the working methods and procedures of the Security Council. We therefore consider that, given the appropriate support and the opportunity, elected members are capable of creating for the whole international community a sense of ownership and belonging, which can only be beneficial to our long-term interests of peace and security.

For these reasons, my delegation believes that the role of the elected members, rather than being stifled, should be enhanced further. My delegation believes that elected members should be able to benefit from adequate support, both from the Secretariat and from the departing members, so that there is no hiatus in the treatment of various issues in the Council. In this regard, we propose the setting up of an appropriate mechanism which could act as an institutional memory and provide the much-needed background information on various issues, which is essential for the proper and constructive participation of elected members in the Council's deliberations.

Like other delegations, Mauritius strongly supports the avowed and tested principle of multilateralism, which has been a harbinger of peace, security and development for nations, irrespective of their size or of economic or political disparities. Although this statement may seem simplistic and overstated, there is one point of convergence regarding multilateralism — it has made this world more interdependent; it has contributed to the concept of a global village; and it has accelerated the pace for concerted and collective action in matters that override territorial and geographical boundaries.

We therefore strongly advocate the prominence of multilateralism and its preponderance over any unilateral approach to handling issues of international concern, especially that of the maintenance of international and regional peace and security.

These days the whole world is faced with the imminent threat of a major crisis, which should be a matter of concern to each one of us in the United Nations and to every single member of the Security Council. Many members, both within and outside the Security Council, have rightly pointed out that the elected members are being sidelined from preliminary discussions on possible Security Council action. This cannot be productive; instead, it creates a cloud of secrecy and suspicion, which is not healthy. Here I should like to quote from remarks made by the Secretary-General in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 11 October 2002:

> "Openness is the emerging hallmark of our time. But we need to make it work. Otherwise, countries and peoples might retreat behind protectionism, or, worst of all, reject global citizenship or globalization in favour of narrow concepts of national interest not at all appropriate for an interdependent world".

There is a universal consensus on the need to promote openness and transparency in all United Nations activities and decision-making processes. The Security Council should not be an exception. If we are to see an effective, results-oriented Council worthy of the credibility it has been accorded since its creation, we must be open to novel ideas and suggestions for reform.

While we acknowledge the efforts made by Council members towards the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Charter as well as their strong commitment to its principles, we believe that collective interests should not be sacrificed at the altar of national interests. Preserving unity should be the guiding mantra, and every Council member should strive towards that end, since the Council is most effective when it acts in unity. This will be possible only if each and every member State shows a sense of belonging and of selfless commitment in the work of the Council and constructively engages in its deliberations.

Ms. Murnaghan (Ireland): At the outset, I wish to condemn the vicious terrorist attack that took place

last weekend in Bali. I also wish, on behalf of my delegation, to extend sincere condolences to the people and the Government of Indonesia, and also to the relatives of those from various countries who lost their lives or were injured.

We welcome the opportunity of this joint debate to comment on separate but very much interrelated matters. We commend the efforts of the President of the Assembly, Mr. Jau Kavan, on this and other questions before the General Assembly, to group items and to address them in a more coherent fashion.

We welcome this new-look report (A/57/2) of the Security Council to the General Assembly on the Council's activities in the period June 2001 to July 2002. The restructuring of the report, with the inclusion of an introduction of a more analytical character is a good start. The grouping of statistical detail and annexes also contributes to a more readable report. As Ireland moves off the Council at the end of the year, we will have a particular interest in monitoring, from this Hall, the further expansion and deepening of the report. We hope to see even greater analysis, while recognizing some of the constraints involved.

I would like to commend the delegation of Singapore for its determination and very valuable contribution in the realization of this new style report. If I might draw on Ambassador Mahbubani's moving-train analogy in his statement during the debate on Monday, it will be up to those passengers who are getting off the train in a few months' time, as I think Ambassador Koonjul also mentioned, to regularly check on the train's progress as it moves along the track, and to use the opportunities of stops along the way to run a check that the improvements introduced are holding up and that additional modifications to the equipment are added when and where necessary to keep the train rolling along smoothly.

And as Ambassador Koonjul said a moment ago with respect to Mauritius, Ireland too is honoured to have served on the Council. We strongly believe that elected members can make a very valuable contribution. We like to think that we have brought something to the Council's deliberations, and we hope that is not a prideful statement.

During Ireland's term on the Council we have seen, and have been pleased to be associated with, several innovations in the Council's working methods. Among these are the increased frequency of open meetings of the Council and the arrangements for closer consultations with troop-contributing countries — I could mention others. We believe that because of them we will have better access to information and greater opportunities to participate in Council deliberations as a future non-member, so to speak, than was possible even two years ago. We will want to ensure that this continues and develops.

Ireland had an opportunity to debate the report in the open meeting of the Council on 26 September (see S/PV.4616). Therefore, today I will concentrate on just a few issues. I welcome the fact that the Security Council's own discussion of the report took place in public — a further innovation, strongly promoted by non-permanent members Singapore and Colombia.

The Security Council had a very active and busy year since its last report. Africa was a particular focus. Good progress has been made in many conflict regions, but daunting challenges still remain. We are particularly pleased at the new opportunity for a lasting settlement in Angola. We feel that the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius, also deserves, we feel, particular mention. We believe it has done valuable and innovative work, and we would be open to the concept of other Council committees of that nature.

We welcome in particular the fact that the Council has increasingly, for the first time in perhaps many years, substantively, and in a sustained way addressed the situation in the Middle East. We strongly supported the introduction earlier this year of regular monthly briefings but believe there is a need to redouble efforts to attain the goals agreed by the Council and to achieve full implementation of Council resolutions.

Over the years, the Council has been faulted for its lack of transparency, and rightly so. It has taken quite a number of steps, however, to address that criticism, not least in the past two years. We have seen this at first hand and have actively supported opening more meetings to participation by the wider membership. There are additional ways, of course, in which the Council can make its deliberations more transparent, and, for example, briefings for the wider membership have been increased. We wish to make special mention of the Counter-Terrorism Committee under the chairmanship of Ambassador Greenstock of

the United Kingdom, who has made a particular point of keeping the wider membership informed, on a very regular basis, about the work of the Committee. That is a very welcome and important initiative.

As we said in the open debate in the Security Council on this year's report, it is important that the Council, while recognizing the interlinkages that clearly exist among many issues, nevertheless not encroach on other United Nations bodies or on their roles. It is important that the Council complement the work of other United Nations bodies rather than diminish them. As a corollary to this, other bodies need to become more focused in what they do and engage in greater dialogue among themselves and with the Council.

Reform of the United Nations is very much at the top of our agenda at this session. Later this month we will debate the reform proposals put forward by the Secretary-General. As the Millennium Declaration makes clear, and as the Secretary-General has pointed out in his recent report, "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), internal reforms must go hand in hand with reform of the intergovernmental processes. This means changes to how we work here in the General Assembly, but it also includes reform of the Security Council.

We applaud the progress made and being made in terms of the Council's working methods. We are frankly disappointed, however, that progress on the more substantive issue — how to reform the Security Council, to make it a more representative body and one better equipped to deal with the challenges of the twenty-century — has not gained more traction in the last year or two. We do not call into question the dedication of representatives in the Open-Ended Working Group, and valuable work has been done on trying to narrow the differences between positions. But that is not enough.

My delegation still draws its inspiration from the Millennium Declaration and the commitment therein not just to work harder on the issues of reform but to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. It is not enough that we just continue to strive; we must collectively work with determination for a solution which is comprehensive and will give us a Council which is strengthened because it enjoys renewed legitimacy and is also efficient and effective because it is more responsive to new challenges in a world vastly different from the one which existed in the immediate post-World-War period, different even from the one which emerged after the cold War, and, regrettably, also very different from that which existed at the turn of this new century.

We share the view expressed here on Monday by the representative of Germany that interim solutions are simply makeshift and run counter to the explicit commitment in the Millennium Declaration to a comprehensive reform of the Council, covering all aspects. We certainly undertake at the start of this new session to work with the President and the Bureau to find ways in which we can, hopefully, take our work forward during this session.

Mr. Meléndez-Barahona (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): While reaffirming our support for the statement made by Costa Rica on 14 October on behalf of the Rio Group, we would like to take this opportunity to make additional comments on the subjects under consideration.

My delegation believes that joint consideration of the report of the Security Council (A/57/2) and the question of the reform of the Council — in accordance with the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group which is studying both substantive and procedural issues, including those related to the Council's working methods — is appropriate, not only because of the linkage between the two items; it also means saving time and money, particularly for the Organization, which, as we constantly lament, faces a financial crisis affecting the fulfilment of its mandate to achieve the goals enshrined in the Charter.

With respect to the specific issue of Security Council reform, we have carefully listened to and read the statements of many delegations. We have seen that there are often opposing positions, some optimistic and others pessimistic, some realistic in their approach and others idealistic. In our view, this is simply the result of diverse perceptions and the result of the political interests and priorities of each country or group of countries concerning decisions to be taken by States on an issue of great importance, and which will affect national interests if an order institutionalized by the Organization's Charter is modified. Those changes would be consistent with the aspirations and wishes of the majority of Member States. However, those changes absolutely require the political will and determination of a minority of States which have

special privileges and powers under the Charter to allow or not to allow the required reforms.

That accords with the view set out in the Open-ended Working Group's report on the reform of the Security Council, which makes no mention of substantive aspects of the discussions in the meetings held during the year or of recommendations to modify the process. In particular, it contains no critical analysis of the causes of the lack of substantive progress. On the other hand, there is a great diversity of positions on all the proposals submitted by States and which remain on the table.

Despite that perception, we do not want to give the impression that we are unaware that some progress has been made on questions of procedure and working methods. But we must state that they are not the satisfactory results that we were hoping to see, as part of a broader, integrated process of reform which has gone on for some ten years now, with meetings that proceed in a vicious circle, and which continue to be a source of concern.

Although there is general agreement on the need for substantive changes to the structure and functioning of the Security Council, the formal granting of special privileges and powers to some States constitutes one of the principal obstacles to reaching general agreement. Such agreement would enable the organ responsible for international peace and security to fulfil its mandate and to adopt a more democratic, transparent, fair and impartial decision-making process. As a result, the Council's decisions would be more legitimate, as it would be truly representative, acting on behalf of all Member States in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter.

We live in a time of very complex and difficult situations. If we compare our time to the era when the Organization was created — and even more so if we compare it with previous periods — we can see that the serious challenges facing humankind have acquired global dimensions, transcending the capacities of individual States. When, in 1945, the United Nations was created in accordance with the conditions prevailing at that time, it was simply a product of the process of evolution of peoples, particularly in that we joined forces in order, by means of a multilateral mechanism, to prevent the scourge of war, its causes and its consequences and to promote the progress of nations based on the dignity and value of human beings. Currently, the global nature of the phenomena threatening international peace and security requires an even greater spirit of cooperation and determination of all States comprising the international community, without exception. This would enable the United Nations, one of the greatest innovations of the twentieth century, which would have to be invented if it did not exist, to adapt itself to the new realities and conditions of current international relations, characterized by globalization and interdependence.

It is important to recall that at various international summits, particularly the Security Council Summit of 31 January 1992, that of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995 and the Millennium Summit in 2000, our heads of State and Government, recognizing the need, politically committed themselves to supporting and carrying out whatever changes were necessary to strengthen the United Nations, particularly the multilateral system of collective security. In practice, regrettably, we have not seen the fulfilment of those promises to adapt the Organization to current conditions.

I think that it is important to recall, as well, some recommendations contained in a document entitled "Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), issued in 1992 by the Secretary-General, at the request of the Security Council Summit. The recommendations are just as valid now as they were in the past. They state that:

> "Never again must the Security Council lose the collegiality that is so essential to its proper functioning ... A genuine sense of consensus deriving from shared interests must govern its work, not the threat of the veto or the power of any group of nations. And it follows that agreement among the permanent members must have the deeper support of the other members of the Council, and the membership more widely, if the Council's decisions to be effective and endure." (*para. 78*)

> "The powerful must resist the dual but opposite calls of unilateralism and isolationism if the United Nations is to succeed." (*para. 80*)

> "Democracy within the family of nations means the application of its principles within the world Organization itself. This requires the fullest consultation, participation and engagement of all States, large and small, in the work of the Organization ... The principles of the Charter

must be applied consistently, not selectively ..." (*para. 82*)

In our opinion, those principles continue to be valid and are essential in order for the Organization not to be weakened but, rather, to be strengthened and to achieve greater trust and legitimacy.

Similarly, we believe to be important in this respect the delegation of Malaysia's citation of the representative of the United Kingdom, who said, "States cannot play a unilateral role in the modern world, but they must play a role that adds power to the collective objectives of the United Nations." (*S/PV.4616, p. 10*)

In our view, that statement reflects the important place that multilateralism holds in world affairs, which simply convinces us even more that the process of reform in the Security Council needs to be re-evaluated so that we can decide how to reorient its considerations and achieve the objectives and aspirations of the United Nations Member States.

Finally, in the light of the current international situation, I believe it is important to draw certain lessons from history with regard to the subject under consideration. The League of Nations and the system of collective security established after the First World War did not work, were a failure and disappeared because member States took unilateral actions that weakened the system. As a result, trust and respect were lost, as well as legitimacy. We have full confidence that that will not happen with the United Nations. The role and the achievements of the world Organization, in accordance with its purposes and principles, are relevant, particularly for developing countries. Therefore, it is an indispensable institution in the international institutional system to coordinate and harmonize the efforts of nations to achieve common purposes.

I should like to reiterate that El Salvador is firmly convinced of the importance and the value of the United Nations and of multilateralism. That is why my country's President and its Minister for Foreign Affairs have on various occasions expressed in this forum the Government of El Salvador's firm commitment and political determination to contribute actively to the quest for collective solutions to the challenges facing our peoples, urging all Member States to make efforts to ensure that the United Nations fulfils its mandate in accordance with the aspirations of peoples, on whose behalf the Organization was created.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): I wish at the outset to express our profound condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of Indonesia as well as to those of Australia and other nations whose nationals succumbed to the heinous terrorist attack in Bali last weekend. His Majesty's Government of Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations anywhere in the world. Our hearts and minds go out to the bereaved families of the dead and the injured, and we pray for their speedy recovery from a trauma of irreparable proportions. We hope and pray that the perpetrators of that crime will soon be brought to justice.

The United Nations Charter, in its Articles 15 and 24, requires the Security Council to submit its annual report and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for consideration. Article 15, paragraph 1, categorically provides that such reports "shall include an account of the measures that the Security Council has decided upon ... to maintain international peace and security."

In addition, the General Assembly, in resolution 51/193, calls upon the Council to include in its reports, among other things, information on its consultations of the whole, on the role of Assembly resolutions in the Council's decision-making and on steps taken to improve the Council's working methods.

Every year, the Security Council has been submitting its annual reports to the General Assembly, and every year those reports have attracted Member States' wide-ranging comments, observations and suggestions, which, if they were implemented, would only enhance the work and the credibility of the Council. Unfortunately, there has been a perception that the Council has not heard most of the recommendations. This year, however, thanks to the untiring devotion and initiative of some Council members, the story has been different. I thank and congratulate Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon, President of the Security Council, on submitting the report of the Security Council to the Assembly in a slimmer volume and in a changed format.

It is gratifying to note that some of the very pertinent comments and observations made by Member States before the Assembly in previous years

concerning the Council's annual report have indeed been heeded. The report has been more or less cheered, not because the Council has drastically improved its working methods — as the Organization's membership would like — but because it has included a chapter of analytical introduction to the report and has changed the format. The change has served two purposes: it has helped lessen the membership's frustration over the Council's rather conservative approach to its work, and it has encouraged the membership to make more constructive comments on the Council's report in the hope that, at some point in future, such advice will be translated into action.

My delegation sincerely appreciates the improvement in the Council's presentation of the report, including that in the report's format. While we are aware of the political difficulties in presenting details in the report, we believe that there is still significant room for improvement in making the report more analytical. Our sincere appreciation goes to all members of the Council, including in particular Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani and his team, for demonstrating, with their will and commitment, that untiring efforts and energy do indeed bear fruit. We congratulate all Council members on their collective agreement to adopt their report in this new format.

Apart from comments on the report itself, the Council has traditionally attracted suggestions for making it more transparent, more democratic and more responsive in its functions and more representative in its structure. If the past two days of discussion on the report are any guide, it would be illusory to believe that a change in format will automatically dilute comments regarding other areas of the Council's important work.

The need for further transparency in the Council's work has not diminished. The participation of non-members in deliberations on issues before the Council must be increased. Public debates or open public meetings, perhaps intended to address that gap, have now been ritualized, and at times are perceived as indirectly camouflaging the Council's own inherent weaknesses. Questions have also been raised as to whether such debates in areas best left to the mandates of other bodies are doing any good towards fulfilling the Council's core responsibilities, and as to whether cooperation between the Council and other United Nations bodies, as provided for by the Charter, would have better served the same purposes.

During the past year, the world witnessed the historic role of the United Nations in the emergence of Timor-Leste as an independent nation, leading to its acceptance last month as the newest Member of the Organization. The Council's work that helped to bring that about is well appreciated. Similarly, its role in uniting virtually the entire world in the fight against terrorism in the wake of the horrific events of 11 September 2001 was unprecedented.

As a committed troop-contributing nation, Nepal also appreciates the Council's positive role in forging ways to strengthen the relationship between troop-contributing countries and Council members, especially in the tripartite spirit of affairs. We understand the significance and the impact of such a relationship in the success of United Nations peacekeeping operations, and we encourage the Council to devise ways and means that further enrich and strengthen that relationship in an institutionalized manner.

The innovation of the Security Council in sending its own missions to the field may have greatly contributed to making its decisions reflect more accurately the reality on the ground. However, a sense of balance and fairness should govern such missions. In fact, balanced treatment of all United Nations peacekeeping missions, irrespective of where they are located, constitutes an objective that the Council should strive to attain in future.

The question of reforming the structure of the Council, including with respect to the veto, has been one of the most intriguing issues over the past several years. In its work, the Council can reflect the aspirations of the membership only when it can regard itself as a representative body in the present context. The Secretary-General echoed the views and the feelings of the membership when he said that no United Nations reform could be complete without reform of the Council's structure. With regard to this issue, the views and the position of Nepal, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, are well known and well formed, and we are open to an expansion in the Council's membership based on a ratifiable consensus.

On the whole, we believe the reformed Council should be more democratic, more transparent, more representative and more accountable than it is at present.

Finally, in the last two days of this debate, we came across many additional insights regarding the

scope of reform in both the structure and functioning of the Council. The process of reform has begun and the Council has shown that it is not entirely ignoring the valuable recommendations of the membership.

At this stage, I wish to express my appreciation once again to the Council members for their valuable contribution to the work of the Council, including the preparation of the current annual report.

In the same vein, my delegation also congratulates Angola, Pakistan, Chile, Germany and Spain on their election to the Council as non-permanent members for the next term. Since reform is a continuous process, we hope and believe that the new Council members will continue to expedite the process of making the Council more responsive to the expectations of the membership during their term on the Council.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Before addressing the subject under consideration, I wish to express Morocco's condolences to Indonesia and to all the families of the victims of the serious terrorist attack that occurred in Bali a few days ago. The Kingdom of Morocco condemns and combats terrorism in all its forms, whatever its origin.

We wish first of all to commend the Security Council on the introduction of its latest report to the General Assembly, provided by our colleague, Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon. On this occasion, we also wish to recall the highly positive contribution made by Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore, which made it possible to reduce the size of the report and to make it much more accessible.

The Charter entrusts the Security Council with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It discharges this responsibility in the name of all Member States, and that is why the report on the activities of the Council is of direct interest to us all.

Some of the questions covered in the report relate to crises that threaten international peace and security and have led to Council action under Chapter VII of the Charter. Of course, we are all bound by decisions that are adopted in this context, and the Kingdom of Morocco, particularly committed to international legality, intends to comply strictly. Other questions relate to disputes that may threaten international peace and security if they continue. Under Chapter VI of the Charter, the Council is empowered to recommend — these are recommendations — whatever peaceful settlement processes it considers appropriate.

In most cases, once peace is consolidated in a given part of the world, through the conclusion of a ceasefire guaranteed by a peacekeeping force, the Council encourages negotiation among the States or parties concerned to arrive at a definitive and lasting settlement. The regional dimension is often emphasized by the Council, as in the case of West Africa, as it involved bringing together the countries of the Mano River region. His Majesty, King Mohammed VI, made a personal contribution to this effort by convening a summit of the three Heads of State of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in February 2002. Moroccan diplomacy is currently working to create the conditions conducive to the holding of a second summit, in order to strengthen regional cooperation for promoting peace in the West African region. The region has, unfortunately, recently fallen victim to grave fighting in our brotherly country, Côte d'Ivoire.

We wish to underscore all the attention that is now begin given by the Security Council to humanitarian issues, either with a view to reducing the impact of economic sanctions on civilian populations through what has been called the concept of smart sanctions, or through relief and assistance to populations in countries in conflict, or else through efforts to alleviate the plight of refugees in order to restore their freedom to settle wherever they choose, and to enforce the obligation of parties to a dispute to respect human rights and to release without delay all the prisoners that they may be holding.

Peace must be of immediate benefit to the persons involved. They must feel its positive effects and, therefore, be motivated to contribute to strengthening the peace. This is why, in our view, the humanitarian aspects of the maintenance of peace are essential. And we are gratified by the importance that is now being given to these aspects by the Council. It is our heartfelt hope that the international community will give strong support to Angola in order to enable it to confront the humanitarian problems that have emerged — before our very eyes through the media — following the settlement of the conflict there.

On the occasion of our consideration of this report, it is important that there be a dialogue between the General Assembly and the Security Council. But it

is also important that the distribution of competence between these two bodies, as provided by the Charter, be fully respected. The overall balance of our Organization depends on this.

This is also an opportunity for the Moroccan delegation to emphasize that we appreciate the Security Council's wish for transparency and the efforts that have been made to involve the troop-contributing countries, including our own, in decision-making processes relating to peacekeeping operations.

And now, as far as reform of the Council is concerned, an issue that is always evoked but which is still as elusive as the Loch Ness monster, we would like to confine ourselves to recalling that we are not in favour of an extension of the right of veto, because this would simply aggravate the already complex handling of this right within the Council. What really matters, inasmuch as any revision of the Charter depends on the agreement of the five permanent members, is to avoid any abuse of the use of the veto.

On the other hand, we might envisage a fresh look at the list of elected members in order to take into account the changes that have taken place in the size and structure of United Nations membership since the creation of our Organization. There has, of course, already been an initial review, which led to an increase from 11 to 15, but we can again review the number and the structure of these elected members. That being the case, it seems to us that Council reform can take place only in the context of overall consideration of the new architecture of the United Nations — an architecture that is necessary for strengthening the Organization's effectiveness.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the United Nations is an indispensable forum in today's world. But it is also up to us to revitalize it so as to strengthen positive forces in the face of those of terror and destruction.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): I would like at the outset to express, on behalf of my Government, our deep sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the people and the Government of Indonesia for the terrible loss that they have suffered as a result of the recent terrorist attacks. Our hearts also go out to those States that lost nationals in that horrible attack.

Like the Deputy Permanent Representative of Ireland who spoke earlier, I would like to pick up the analogy presented to us by Ambassador Mahbubani in order to illustrate our national position with regard to the work of the Security Council. We keep running parallel to the tracks of the moving train and are sometimes told through an open window what is going on inside. Sometimes, the window opens even wider and we are asked our opinion on what should be done inside the train. Given the number of people running with us and the fact that most of them have legs that are longer than ours, we do not even think about jumping on the train, hoping that those who are running with us today will not forget about us and the other runners tomorrow, when they have made it onto the train themselves. When talking to our people, we call the train, "our train", which both fills us with pride and makes us feel, at times, like impostors.

The Security Council is widely perceived to be the United Nations. Quite a few people outside this building either do not know that there is much more to this Organization than the Council or they do not quite understand why States attach great importance to the work of the United Nations if they cannot play an active role in making its most important decisions. Given that fact, we must work towards two goals: enhancing the relevance of the General Assembly and ensuring that the work of the Council enjoys strong support from the international community as a whole. Only this can ensure the credibility and political legitimacy of the Council in the long run. That legitimacy is grounded precisely here, in this Hall, where all States gather in the pursuit of the purposes of the Charter. Those two goals happen to coincide in the debate that is about to conclude.

Accountability of the Council to the membership as a whole is one of the most important features for securing the credibility and legitimacy of the Council in the long term. That is what makes this debate so relevant, and we appreciate the intention of the Council to consider the results of the debate in order to bring about further improvements. However, accountability cannot be guaranteed through an annual exercise only, especially given the number of issues the Council has to deal with and the highly sensitive nature of many of the issues before it. If the Council is truly going to act on behalf of the entire membership, constant interaction must take place, in particular on sensitive matters.

When the Security Council held the discussions which eventually led to the adoption of resolution 1422

(2002), for example, it found itself in the ironic situation of pronouncing on what was really the mandate of a different constituency, the Assembly of States Parties to the International Criminal Court. It was therefore imperative for the Council to listen to the States Parties — as well as to every State Member of the Organization — given the wider implications of the debates for the functions and powers of the Council.

At this juncture, we would also like to welcome the holding of the open debate concerning the situation in Iraq, which the Council began this morning. United Nations action on this issue will be credible only if it enjoys very broad political support from the membership as a whole.

Open debates are thus important, and they have increased in number over the years. Despite their importance, however, we wonder whether it would be possible to have more meetings with an interactive format so as to involve the rest of the membership. Increased interaction would certainly be very useful. We realize that there are limits to such a format, but the annual debate on this subject might be a good occasion to test such a format, for example through a panel, enabling members of the Council to present the annual report and engage in a dialogue with other Member States on any issues arising from the report. We realize that that would attract very great interest and entail an additional workload for the Council, as well as make further demands on the resources of the United Nations — but hardly more so than the 12 hours of debate that are about to conclude. This could be a very important addition to current Council practice, thus enhancing its standing and performance. The friendly competition — as it has been referred to — between the Council and the Assembly is inevitable and, to some degree, healthy, but it has to be underpinned by the common understanding that the two bodies need one another.

We are very grateful to those delegations that initiated the significant changes in this year's report of the Security Council. Those changes constitute important steps towards the desirable and, indeed, necessary interaction between the Council and the General Assembly. We hope that more will be possible and that the Council will address with common resolve the issues of transparency, credibility and effectiveness.

On the eve of the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group there appears to be little reason to celebrate. There are positive aspects, however. Many of the improvements in the working methods of the Council emanate, directly or indirectly, from the work carried out by the Working Group. Such changes are preparing the ground for the comprehensive reform that we have been discussing for such a long time. The journey, however, is not the destination.

Everyone would agree that the Council no longer reflects today's realities. If its composition continues to be a reminder of times long past, its standing will inevitably diminish. The discussions of the Working Group have been very complex. In the end however, it comes down to one simple fact: the question of the veto is at the core of a comprehensive reform. Any possible further progress is thus a matter of finding the political will to enhance the legitimacy of the Council.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on items 11 and 40.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the report of the Security Council contained in document A/57/2 and of corrigendum 1 in Chinese, English and Spanish only?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda items 11 and 40.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.